

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Listing of Claims

The following listing of claims replaces all previous listings or versions thereof:

1-4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently amended) A method of preparing an *Escherichia coli* culture for transformation at increased efficiency as compared to *E. coli* K12 MG1655, the method comprising

culturing the *E. coli* to an optical density at 650 nm of at least 0.4 in a medium,

wherein the *E. coli* is an ~~MDS~~multi-deletion series strain lacking bases 263080-324632, 1398351-1480278, 2556711-2563500, 2754180-2789270, 2064327-2078613, 3451565-3467490, 2464565-2474198, 1625542-1650865, 4494243-4547279, 3108697-3134392, 1196360-1222299, 564278-585331, 15388-20563, 263080-324632, 564278-585331, 602639-608573, 1398351-1480278, 2064327-2078613, 2507650-2515969, 2556711-2563500, 2754180-2789270, 379293-387870, 389121-399029, 2992959-2996892, 3182796-3189712, 3451565-3467490, 2464565-2474198, 1625542-1650785, 4494243-4547279, 3108697-3134392, 1196360-1222299, 687074-688268, 1386912-1396646, 2099418-2135739, 2284410-2288200, 3359747-3365277, 3648921-3651343, 1128637-1140209, 1960605-1977294, 1995085-2021700, 4553059-4594581, 522062-529348, 728616-738185, 1525914-1531648, 3616623-3623309, 3759620-3767868, 1041253-1049768, 1085329-1096603, 2163172-2175230, 3578769-3582674, and 3718262-3719704 of the *E. coli* strain K12 MG1655.

6. (Previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the medium is Terrific Broth.

7. (Previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the culturing is done at in excess of 26°C.

8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the transformants recovered are in excess of 10^{10} transformants per microgram of introduced DNA.

9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 5, further comprising transforming the bacteria with a foreign DNA molecule.

10. (Previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the optical density at 650 nm is at least 0.6.

11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the optical density at 650 nm is at least 1.0.